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## Critical review

# All change within the academy: dissonance and role conflict, or the potential for new forms of professionalism?

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## Contextualization

Drawing on literature relating to managerialism and marketisation, for example, this paper provides a critical account of key organisational changes within British Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which challenge traditional notions of academic professionalism. The author argues that whilst changes within higher education (HE) are part of broader trends within the public sector that they have particular resonance for HEIs because they potentially compromise the pedagogic relationship with students and can create dissonance and role conflict among academics through, for example, work intensification and the undermining of traditional notions of professionalism. The second half of the paper focuses more specifically on widening participation policy, an area the author is currently researching as part of her doctoral studies at the Institute of Education.

**Abstract:** *British HEIs face increasing challenges in the twenty first century as they continue to adapt to public sector management systems originally introduced during the thirteen years of the Thatcher government administration, rapid technological advancements, globalisation and policy directives to widen participation. This paper initially foregrounds the changing organisational context of HEIs in Britain by drawing upon relevant literature and case study examples from a post-1992 University. The paper goes on to illustrate some of the micro-consequences of managerialism and marketisation through widening participation and briefly assesses their impact vis-à-vis gender, the pedagogical relationship and workload intensification. The author argues that whilst recent trends and associated organisational changes within HEIs in Britain are creating dissonance and role conflict and eroding academic professionalism, that new form of professionalism are also possible*

## Introduction

Drawing upon relevant literature and case study examples from a post-1992 university this paper considers changes in HEIs in Britain associated with public sector management systems introduced during the Thatcher government administration between 1979–1992, technological advancements, globalisation and policy directives to widen participation. Three models of rationality are presented as an explanation of recent trends in British HE policy. The first, the ‘*bureaucratic-professional*’ model, derives from Weber’s theory (1991) describing discrete elements of bureaucratic-professional organisations which he located into a coherent totality explained by one overarching phenomenon: rationality; for example, hierarchical structures of authority with clearly circumscribed areas of command and responsibility and administrative systems with tasks distributed as official duties (Abercrombie *et al*, 1994). The second model which the author refers to as ‘*economic rationality*’ explains the shift from bureaucratic-professional regimes to public sector management systems referred to as ‘managerialism’. The third model, which the author describes as ‘*technological rationality*’ elucidates the impact of technological advancements and associated phenomenon such as globalisation and the knowledge-exchange economy. Whilst all three models of rationality present HEIs with challenges and constraints, a central

contention made by the author is that the bureaucratic-professional model at least accorded academics positions of entrusted professionalism which have now, arguably, been eroded; thus necessitating the re-positioning of academics based on principles embracing criticality and ethical professionalism. Such stances both question and challenge prevailing political and social concerns within HEIs and endorse reflexivity through espousing what different authors consider are important underpinning principles for HE, for example, equal educational opportunities, social justice and an ethic of care for students and academics (O'Brien and Down, 2002; Webster and Bennett, 2002; Hugman, 2003; Parton, 2003).

## **Changes in public sector management**

Public sector management has undergone radical transformation over the last twenty six years as the post-war welfare state came under attack from managerialism and marketisation (Clarke, 1998). Traditional welfare regimes related to education and medicine, for example, provided public services within a regulatory framework of bureaucratic rules with professionals operating on the basis of trust, which translated into the application of specialist knowledge, appropriate codes of conduct (professionalism) and professional discretion. Welfare professionals were entrusted to serve the public good and were subjected to limited political and public scrutiny. Key writers, for example, Clarke and Newman (1997) and Clarke *et al* (2001) argue that formations of power associated with rationality embedded in the bureaucratic-professional regimes of the 'old' welfare state have been replaced with policy technologies premised on economic rationalism i.e. the three Es: 'economy', 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' and the three Ms: 'markets', 'managers' and 'managerialism' (Taylor-Gooby, 1993). Clarke and Newman (1997) trace these changes in public sector management back to the Thatcher era of government and the infiltration of 'New Right' ideology, or neo-liberalism with its emphasis on economic rationalism through competition, free market principles and individualism.

Managerialism and marketisation are considered by several writers, for example, Newman (2001) to have fundamentally transformed how public services are organised, managed and delivered and to have altered the positioning of key professionals. For example, additional managerial tiers were introduced within public organisations from the 1980s onwards with the specific aim of directing professional activity towards ends defined politically and organisationally around managerial and market principles (Abbott and Meerabeau, 1998). Within HEIs there are more managers than in the past. At the time of writing, thirteen per cent of the academic workforce was engaged in supervising the work of colleagues (Nolan, 2004, p 16). The increase of managerialism within the public sector has been criticised for palpably eroding positions of entrusted professionalism by stressing the 'otherness' of professionals and by separating out the management function of organisations (Abbott and Meerabeau, 1998). Within universities there is also a greater emphasis on quality assurance and performance management, for example quality audits, subject reviews and outcome measurements (Power, 1997). Morley asserts that the changes in public sector management 'are part of a wider ideological process which is transforming relations of power, culture, control and accountability, and which reflect within social policy an ongoing reconceptualisation and restructuring of the state' (1999, p 28). Rapid advancements in information communication technology (ICT) and globalisation i.e. the growth of the market economy have, the author argues, compounded the impact of managerialism and marketisation and are in danger of changing HEIs beyond recognition, particularly professional roles, work cultures and positions of entrusted professionalism.

## **The policy impact of managerialism and marketisation**

### ***Concerns from within the academy***

Critical captions of commentary in The Times Higher Education Supplement at the time of writing this paper paint a revealing picture of the current context of British HEIs and the prevailing concerns of academics. Nolan, drawing upon a large-scale Social Research Council study, suggests that the world of work for academics has changed considerably and that the 'language of the international market has supplanted professional values that predominated in the past' (2004, p 16). In critiquing the limitation of the predominance of economic rationalist imperatives associated with globalisation, managerialism and marketisation within British HEIs, Nolan (*ibid.*) argues that policy makers need to 'think out of the box' in order to address the low morale among academics associated with the casualisation of the HE workforce, for example, higher rates of temporary appointments, wage differentials and gender inequalities. On a related theme, Brecher warns that the fundamental values of HE are in danger of being lost through the increased emphasis on utilitarianism and economic benefits (2004, p 23). He suggests current education policy reflects a lack clarity about the core purpose of HE and consequently there is 'no synthesis in academe's erratic orbits' and that British HEIs are in danger of becoming corporatised universities resembling a Ford Motor factory with academics as assembly-line workers doing more and more mindless activities' (*ibid.*). Both Nolan (2004) and Brecher (2004) assertions suggest that the economic rationalist principles that have been introduced into HE can be criticised for being poorly conceptualised and fragmented in their rationality. Research findings from interviews with teachers, support this contention: managerialism is charged with having torn the very heart out of teachers work (O'Brien and Down, 2002). Finally, in reference to widening participation, Utey suggests HEIs are under immense pressure to accept as many students as possible and that the more 'bums-on seat' policy leads to more students to drop out' (2004, p 11) because some students may be unequipped to study at HE level. Utey's concerns suggests there has been a lack of political foresight about the unintended, but foreseeable, consequences of the introduction of utilitarian principles into HE through the Government target to increase the number of students under the age of 30 in HE by 50% by 2010 (DfES, 2003a).

The discussion thus far indicates that managerialism, economic rationalism and the marketisation of E have created dissonance and role conflicts within the academy, which may have particular resonance for female academics. Some feminist discourses contend that public sector management systems premised on economic rationality reinforce and compound existing gender inequalities because they are themselves intrinsically gendered and embody masculine values which can lead to domination of men over women (Abercrombie *et al*, 1994, p 38).

### ***The impact of technological advancements and globalisation***

Discernible changes within HEIs have also, the author argues, been influenced by technological advancements, for example, the world-wide-web and electronic communication. This phenomenon forms part of 'a global knowledge revolution that is being driven by the creation and application of new technologies' (Strathdee, 2005, p 432). With a few clicks of a computer mouse, it is now possible to correspond with others and transmit information in seconds and to have access to increasingly wider sources of knowledge, not least information. Whilst technological advancements undoubtedly have their benefits, they are also of concern. It is the author's contention that advancements in ICT appear to have increased the level and pace of first order activities and related workloads, for example, correspondence with students and administrative tasks. To cite one example, within one department of the University in question, all assessment feedback for essays is now

conducted via email, which entails sending a large volume of emails to individual students, which is both time-consuming and indicates a shift towards more de-personalised communication with students.

The increased demands of technology coupled with the drive for greater productivity and have led to increased performativity. Ball (2003, p 2) refer to 'performativity' as 'a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as a means of control, attrition and change'. Increased performativity through performance management also increase the potential for what Ball (2003, p 8) terms 'intensification': 'An increase in the volume of first order activities required by the technologies of reform – and the 'costs' in terms of time and energy of second order activities themselves like performance monitoring and management'. Intensification and de-personalised email communication may also threaten what many academics value: their pedagogic relationship with students and scope for critical analysis (Levidow, 2002, p 2). These concerns potentially compromise traditional notions of professionalism premised on direct communication and appropriate professional boundaries. Intensification also has implications for stress levels and morale and may have particular consequences for many women and some men who are often 'juggling' competing demands i.e. family and work commitments (Morley, 1999; Raddon, 2002; Devos, 2004).

## Knowledge production

Key writers (Barnett, 1997; Brecher, 2004; Nolan, 2004) are in broad agreement that globalisation is changing how knowledge is produced and exchanged. Students can now access knowledge themselves from a variety of different sources and are no longer reliant on their own tutors or even academics in general to transmit specialist knowledge. Levidow (2002, p 3) sees the growth of the so called 'knowledge economy' as central to the neo-liberal project with its emphasis on the 'information society'. Barnett outlines the implications of these developments:

The category of academic [.....] is dissolving, since the boundaries between the academic and the wider world *and* between the academic and the student are weakened. In turn, the authority possessed by the academic is diminished. [.....] academics have lost their monopoly over the production of high-status knowledge (1997, pp 146 and 150)

This analysis suggests that the globalisation of HE is undermining academics power and status per se but especially the production and exchange of high-status knowledge. Foucault's work provides some useful insight here and can be interpreted as considering knowledge and power as inextricably linked i.e. knowledge translates into power in terms of status, privilege and the hierarchical positioning of professionals in society (Perkins, 2002; Olssen *et al*, 2004). Loss of power may not only change academics professional standing but may also change the power dynamics in classrooms as students become less dependent on academics for knowledge transmission. As a consequence, academics may need to adapt their teaching repertoires to permit more interactive forms of student learning and engagement. It could, however, be argued that a shift in power relationships could be beneficial because knowledge exchange has the potential to become a two-way process encouraging the creation of democratic learning communities based on the co-production of knowledge with students and ethical professionalism. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged by the author that diminished knowledge production may also potentially undermine academics' credibility and established positions of entrusted professionalism.



## ***Entrusted professionalism under threat***

The globalisation and commodification of knowledge signifies the demise of academics as purveyors of specialist knowledge because the academy is no longer the only definer of what knowledge is (Morley, 1999). The neo-liberal/managerial agenda arguably compounds this tendency because from this perspective, the purpose of knowledge is seen as a means of satisfying individuals' desire to compete and as a part of human capital (Olssen *et al*, 2004). Hence, students primarily acquire knowledge to optimise their position in the market. Historically, academics have been involved in similar pursuits through academic hegemony i.e. engaging in human capital exchange - through their monopoly on specialised knowledge - to enhance their positioning within the academy. As a case in point, one needs only to consider academics in the Russell Group universities who have been criticised for being elitist and unrepresentative of society, what the author would refer to as 'closed professionalism'. Academics at elite universities and HEIs per se have also variously been accused of representing and recreating particular interests i.e. predominantly those of white, middle class men (Perkin, 2002).

Academic hegemony and social closure in the realm of knowledge exchange have advantages for academics; they can be used as leverage or as a cultural asset to credentialise skills and to gain respectability and privilege (Macdonald, 1995). Closed professionalism may, however, have particular resonance for the positioning of academics in the minority and those with less power, for example, women: 'Men continue to form the majority of all staff grades in HE [.....] with the gender gap being more pronounced in some disciplines than others' (Hill, 2004, p 1). Women are also paid less than men in comparable roles, are less likely to get promoted and are underrepresented in senior professorial positions (Johnston, 2004, p 1). Hence, whilst technological advancements and globalisation present challenges they also raise legitimate questions about whose interests are being served within the academy.

Managerialism, technological advancements and globalisation appear to present a bleak picture for the positioning of academics within the academy, particularly if taken to their full essentialist/deterministic conclusions: academics, according to this view, are reduced to puppets of the State's neo-liberal educational policy agenda. However, the temptation for dualism is resisted here i.e. the presentation of discourses depicting the old traditional order as the golden era and recent trends within HE as an all pervasive dark shadow. Such assertions unwittingly imply that managerialism and marketisation policy directives and related phenomena are conclusive and irreversible and reduce academics 'to the status of mere functionaries in systems they neither [necessarily] approve of [or indeed] control', which is not necessarily the case (Clark, 2004, p 22). Indeed, postmodernist discourses offer competing explanations for recent educational policy trends. Drawing upon Derrida, Sim suggests:

that 'society is to be 'read' like a written text and, as with a text, meaning is not fixed but may shift with different readings and different readers. Consequently, any 'reading' (analysis) of society is tentative and never final in its judgments (1999, pp 30-38).

The excerpt suggests that the modern world is complex, open to differing interpretations, explanations and responses, with the potential to evolve in different ways. The postmodern paradigm depicts more optimistic conclusions for HEIs by suggesting that even within restrictive frames of reference academics have scope to interpret change, to construct their own sense of reality and to adopt defensive positions. They also have the capacity to negotiate or resist changes in ways that minimise disturbances in day-to-day activity and may position themselves within contested spaces implicitly challenging the constraints of economic-rationalist imperatives by, for example, prioritising the pedagogical relationship and

student support. Postmodernist paradigms make a useful contribution to debates about changes in HE by resisting the sometimes defensive and defeatist prognosis implicit in managerialism discourses. Nevertheless, postmodernism could also be criticised, the author argues, for lacking discursive solutions or alternatives. In sum, it is an important time for HEIs to critically reflect on why they exist as they face major restructuring forced upon them by the challenges of managerialism, marketisation, the increasing availability and capacities of ICT, the impact of globalisation and increased and widening participation (Gibbs, 2001).

## **Policy reforms to widen participation**

Post-Dearing (1997) the UK Government pursued a policy objective to widen participation to HE. A Committee headed by Lord Dearing was asked to consider whether ‘...there should be maximum participation in initial HE by young and mature students and in lifetime learning by adults’ (National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education, 1997, p 5). A significant concern was the under-representation of women, minority ethnic groups and students from non-professional and unskilled socio-economic backgrounds (Watt and Patterson, 2000). The aim of the widening participation agenda introduced post-Dearing was to address this under-representation. The Higher Education White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003a) introduced a target to increase the overall participation rate to 50% of people in HE between the ages of eighteen and thirty by 2010 (DfES, 2003b). At the time of writing, the current Labour Government sees widening participation as a way of ‘extending opportunity and building a quality HE system for many – not just the few’ (Tony Blair *cited by* Universities UK, 2004). However, the Government’s widening participation agenda also stresses the importance of economic growth through skills development and economic competitiveness:

HE is no longer simply an adornment to our national life – of immense value and prestige, but only to a small privilege minority. It is now a sector as important to our society and economy as the big ‘extractive’ industries of the past – and is just as important to our nation’s future in providing the raw material, in terms of skills and innovation, that individuals and whole societies will require’ (Tony Blair *cited by* Universities UK, 2004, p 2).

As suggested from the excerpt, HE is seen as a source of economic and human capital achievable through a shift from an elite to a mass HE system. In an economic and social sense this seems both an astute and commendable development because it provides additional income for universities, enables them to compete more effectively in the global market, and may be promoting equal educational opportunities and increasing diversity within HEIs.

## ***The challenges and limitations of widening participation***

However, the widening participation agenda may not be without problems. Some critics argue that this policy directive provides yet another example of economic rationalist imperatives being introduced throughout UK universities through the marketisation, commodification and ‘massification’ of HE (Morley, 1999). From this perspective, HE is seen as a conduit to develop economic capital i.e. a means of enhancing the UK’s economic growth and international competitiveness and as a means of developing the human capital of individuals i.e. an ‘education for the market’ (Aronowitz, 2000) or a ‘learning factory’ (Tooley, 2000) for new skills. From these respective pretexts HE becomes more synonymous with ‘trainability’ (Bernstein, 2000) and ‘employability’ (Levidow, 2002). Fanghanel (2004) illustrates the limitations of such educational market objectives by arguing that the humanist perspective extolling the virtue of education as a means of developing the individual as a whole is in danger of being eroded. To some extent this dynamic is evident already within

HEIs in Britain through the dilution of academic content and the compartmentalisation of the student learning experience, referred to by Gibbs (2001, p 26) as 'consumable education through modularisation, semesterisation and self-directed learning'. This trend is emerging at the University in question through the introduction of e-learning and shorter semesters to promote autonomous student learning.

Gibbs (2001, p 26) warns of the dangers of these developments by arguing that they can 'lead to the commodification of education into skills packages to be managed through market principles rather than under pedagogical guidance or the morality of fairness'. Such developments potentially lead to the fragmentation of educational provision and could compromise the pedagogical relationship because they arguably hasten the pace to universities becoming 'virtual learning communities' through organisational restructuring endorsing 'learning at a distance'. However, it is also recognised that self-directed learning and e-learning may also support widening participation by providing a more flexible route into HE for students from non-traditional backgrounds, those on low incomes, students with family commitments or with disabilities.

Nonetheless, new growth paradigms revering marketisation and the production of human capital may also present economic paradoxes and unintended consequences for widening participation. An increase in human capital through widening participation could have its limits once the labour market

becomes saturated with graduates. As more and more students obtain degrees they enter an increasingly competitive labour market where having a higher award becomes the norm and which, paradoxically, may result in decreased human capital. There are early signs that this may be happening already with some employers stipulating that graduates must have a 2:1 or above degree and from a prestigious university to be able to distinguish between the large numbers of graduates entering the labour market (Brown *et al*, 2003; Brown and Hesketh, 2004). In the USA this phenomenon has been taken a step further through increased 'job specification' with employers requiring workers to have qualifications beyond those needed to carry out the job (Levidow, 2002). This phenomenon is referred to as 'qualification inflation' or credentialism, due to excess supply rather than any inherent demands of the job (Levidow, 2002). Qualification inflation has the potential to devalue university degrees and implies ever-changing goalposts for both students and graduates. There are some indications that this phenomenon may be beginning to emerge in the UK. The Government proposes to replace the two hundred year old degree classification system, which is now considered no longer "fit for purpose" i.e. too crude to be meaningful and no longer sufficient to provide an accurate indicator between different levels of academic attainment (Baty, 2004).

One potential implication of changing the degree classification is that academic standards may be driven upwards with students under increasing pressure to perform to growing levels of academic attainment. In the worse case scenario this may have implications for widening access for non-traditional students, where there are already retention and progression problems (Taylor and Bedford, 2004). Judging by the USA's experience, the rise of what the author refers to as 'academic capitalism' in the UK could prove problematic; the parody of students and graduates trapped on an increasingly faster treadmill springs to mind. In sum, whilst the Government's widening participation agenda may have intrinsic benefits for economic and human capital, expansion may have its limits because of the perverse way that markets work and if not addressed may actually be counterproductive for both non-traditional students and HEIs. Another concern is that universities may have to raise their own level of productivity to cope with the increasing demands of widening participation and qualification inflation dictated by the market and the Government.



## ***Dilemmas and professional challenges***

As was indicated previously, widening participation appears to have increased the demand for HE, with academic standards in danger of being driven upwards as more and more students compete for relatively fewer places. Manifestly, increased competition could actually disadvantage non-traditional students such as access course students. HEIs may, for example, have to raise the threshold for entry requirements in order to manage increased volumes of applications and may not have sufficient resources for enrolled students who require additional learning support. Consequently, widening participation policy could be in danger of reinforcing issues of under-representation and the class divisions that the Government's widening participation strategy was purportedly set up to address. The introduction of utilitarian principles through the marketisation of HE and increased competition may also raise dilemmas for equal educational opportunities and for greater diversity within HEIs. One way in which I seek to mitigate these potential issues through my own professional practice is by working closely with local colleges and by providing students with guidance on applying to university and preparing for interview. Whilst this activity is time consuming, I would argue it is an essential component of ethical professionalism, and can act as an important counterbalance to the unintended consequences of the widening participation strategy. However, widening participation in a context of high demand does raise professional dilemmas. It could be argued that promoting access to HE in a context of growing demand raises expectations in the knowledge few students are likely to be offered places. Hence, it could be argued that 'while mass HE is an inherently democratic concept, in the current context, it is the democracy of the marketplace' (Harrison, 1994 *cited by* Morley, 1999, p 32).

## ***Workload issues***

Widening participation also arguably has implications for workloads because academic staff within HEIs may be required to raise their level of productivity to deal with increasing numbers of applications, students and associated administrative work. Greater work intensification may have consequences for the working lives of academics, as findings from a study of Australian teachers warn:

All teachers in this study described how non-teaching duties associated with administration, accountability, performance management, documentation, and change in general, demanded an increasing amount of their time. For most of them this meant less time for students and teaching-related activities. Another consequence was the decreasing time available to participate in conversations with their colleagues which only added to their feeling of isolation and stress (O'Brien and Down, 2002, p 123).

Increasing workloads potentially take teachers and academics away from their core purpose i.e. teaching, research and their commitments to students. Work intensification may also undermine collegial support structures and induce stress and low morale. O'Brien and Down (2002, p 119) consider these issues as the 'personal-professional consequences of adopting new work practices that [are] inadequately resourced by government'. However, there appears to be little recognition by Government of the potential impact of marketisation and increased workloads on the core purpose of HE, and on the working lives of academics. Indeed, Levidow (2002) argues that increasing workloads are frequently presented as an efficiency problem rather than a resource issue, or an issue affecting the quality of learning and teaching.

## **The infiltration of performance management within the academy**

Ball (2003) views work intensification and greater 'performativity' as a key characteristic of managerialism which has infiltrated the academy and which is having both a professional and personal impact on the working lives of academics. The infiltration of greater performativity - under the guise of performance management and widening participation - seems to be a subtle process permitting the subversion of issues associated with increasing responsibilities and workloads for both academics and other key staff within HEIs. Key examples include additional work associated with increasing undergraduate applications and student numbers, work programmes allowances, and the collection and presentation of data related to performance targets, outcome measurements and quality audits. O'Brien and Down (2002, p 120) refer to similar trends in teaching in Australia as a style of management that is top-down, prescriptive and manipulative and which permits a systematic level of control over teachers' work through workplace surveillance. Such trends provide another example of the principles of economic rationalism now embedded within the organisational culture of HEIs, and which endorse 'educational efficiency, and accountability, with quality being redefined in accountancy terms' (Levidow, 2002, p 3).

The arbitrary nature of these performance management and efficiency strategies are a matter of concern because they often leave no room for negotiation and increase the potential for academics to be blamed for being inefficient, unmotivated or resistant rather than problems being attributed to heavier workloads. Performance management systems also potentially deprofessionalise and isolate academics and have particular resonance for the positioning of women within the academy. As was mentioned earlier, women often have to balance many competing demands and may struggle to find space for performance management related activity, for example, contributing to the Research Assessment Exercise (Morley, 1999; Raddon, 2002; Devos, 2004). It could also be argued that performance management systems are also pedagogically irrelevant and perhaps damaging because they take academics away from teaching responsibilities, which potentially undermines pedagogical relationship premised on an ethic of care, for example, the provision of pastoral support (O'Brien and Down, 2002; Parton, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

From the preceding analysis it is apparent that the infiltration of managerialism and marketisation within British HEIs, which has been compounded by technological advancements and globalisation, appears to have led to dissonance and role conflict amongst academics through the erosion of professional autonomy and positions of entrusted professionalism, the dilution of the pedagogical relationship and through marketisation and increased workloads. Pessimistic as it may sound, the managerialism agenda and associated phenomena have permeated HEIs organisational cultures and are unlikely to diminish in the short term. However, whilst recognising associated political and social constraints, the author contends that academics may also challenge these policy directives by adopting defensive positions enabling them to champion principles linked to ethical professionalism i.e. social justice and empowering pedagogical relationships (Gaililaer, 2004).

Critical/humanist discourses make useful contributions for addressing dissonance and role conflict by suggesting that academics need to develop new forms of micro-politics by starting from difficulties experienced and by reframing and re-prioritising 'their work as existentially and morally meaningful through small scale practical innovations prompted by them' (Kunnemann, 2004, p 48).

From a postmodernist perspective this would also entail academics re-reading the managerialism script and looking for new meanings and purposes in their work. Whilst recognising this is by no means an easy feat, Kunnemann goes on to suggest that:

The main challenge then becomes [for academics] to articulate a view on the professional basis of their work which combines a commitment to humanistic values with professional inventiveness and new forms of social innovation through the mobilisation of insights and energies at the side of [...] students care (2004, p 48).

A commitment to ethical professionalism requires a return to traditional values which the author argues entails academics reasserting their commitment to social justice, to the empowerment of students, and an ethic of care from HEIs towards staff. The latter applies to both students and academics themselves. In addition to prioritising the pedagogical relationship through democratic knowledge exchange and empowering, empathetic relationships with students, academics need to adopt appropriate professional boundaries to protect themselves from the increasing demands of managerialism, marketisation, technological advancements and globalisation (Gaililaer, 2004). Academics also need to create space and time for critical thinking, risk-taking and professional development.

Turning to widening participation, this entails reclaiming a commitment to equal educational opportunities and social justice and placing an emphasis on morality and communitarianism (social capital) as well as individualism and self-interest (economic and human capital). Academics may also consider adopting a critically reflexive approach by seeing managerialism for what it is: an economic/business model. Finally, it is important to recognise that managerialism and marketisation and associated phenomena do not define who academics are and how they wish to work; hence both old and new liberating forms of professionalism are possible within the academy through a reconstructed political and social contract.

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